### United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management DRAFT Decision Record

### Finding of No Significant Impact

For

Nevada Department of Transportation
Buster Mountain Radio Communication Facility
White Pine County, Nevada
N-82342
EA # NV-040-08-01

### **DECISION:**

It is my decision to authorize the Nevada Department of Transportation Buster Mountain Radio Communication Facility located in White Pine County and described in the proposed action of the Environmental Assessment (EA). I concur with my staff's assessment of the environmental impacts and authorize the proposed action subject to the Ely District's Standard Operating Procedures for communication facilities, the standard conditions that are a part of State and Federal operating regulations for communication facilities, the Egan Resource Management, and the site-specific terms and conditions as listed below:

### Rationale:

I have determined the proposed action is in conformance with the approved Egan Resource Management, and the White Pine County Land Use Plan. The EA analyzes and discloses the potential environmental effects associated with a proposed development of a communication site on public lands.

### Terms and Conditions:

- 1. Land disturbance will be limited to site access, facility construction, use and maintenance.
- 2. Access road construction will include using available topsoil along the edge of the road.
- 3. The operator will be responsible for site access security.
- 4. The operator will be responsible for complete control of noxious and invasive weeds that result from implementation of the proposed action. The operator will monitor for noxious and invasive weeds along the access road and at the site. If noxious weeds occur on the site, the operator will coordinate appropriate treatment with BLM.

Monitoring: The monitoring measures included in the proposed action are sufficient to ensure

mitigation of the potential impacts. No additional monitoring measures are

proposed.

Rationale: As a result of the analysis for the proposed communications facility, it was

determined that the Proposed Action will not result in unnecessary or undue degradation to the public lands. The proposed action is in conformance with Egan Resource Management Plan and is consistent with the White Pine County Land

Use Plan (2007).

### FONSI:

Finding of No Significant Impact: I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) NV-040-08-01, dated May 13, 2008. After consideration of the environmental impacts as described in the EA, and incorporated herein, I have determined that the proposed communication facility, with the standard operating procedures as described in the EA, will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to be prepared. This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

<u>Context:</u> The area potentially affected is the approximately 5.7 million acres of rural White Pine County, Nevada. The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 2 acres of BLM administered land that by itself does not have international, national, regional, or statewide importance.

### Intensity:

1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The environmental assessment has considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the project. On the whole, the project will provide for increased public safety.

Operation will not infringe upon the solitude of local residents and recreationists. Wildlife will be disrupted only during the construction period.

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

Implementation components of the proposed action will enhance public health and safety.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

There are no unique cultural or environmental characteristics that would be

disturbed in the geographic area.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The proposed operations are accepted methods to meet resource and management objectives and are not considered highly controversial.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

There are no effects of the proposed action identified in the EA which are considered uncertain or involve unknown risks.

6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The proposed action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

No significant cumulative impacts have been identified in the EA.

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

No districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places were identified in the project area through the EA. The proposed action will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.

9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

A field visit and review of existing records for this EA determined that no endangered or threatened species or their habitats are present in the project area.

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

The proposed action will not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Jeffrey A. Weeks Field Manager Egan Field Office	Date

### **U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management**

DRAFT Environmental Assessment NV-040-08-01 May 13, 2008

### **Buster Mountain Radio Communication Facility**

**Location:** Buster Mountain

**Township 17 and 18 North** 

Range 58 East

White Pine County, Nevada

Applicant/Address: Nevada Department of Transportation

1263 S. Stewart Street Carson City, Nevada

U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Ely District Office Phone: (775)289-1800

Fax: (775)289-1910



### I. PURPOSE AND NEED

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) plans to submit a right-of-way application to the Bureau of Land Management Ely Field Office (BLM) for the installation of one radio communication facility on Federal land managed by BLM in White Pine County, Nevada. The proposed site location is west of Ely near Little Antelope Summit, south of US 50 on Buster Mountain in the White Pine Range. This Environmental Assessment is an evaluation of the potential environmental consequences of the proposed action.

### **II. CONFORMANCE STATEMENT**

This document is prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and the BLM "Environmental Analysis Guidebook" published October 2001. The proposed action is subject to, and conforms with, the BLM Egan Resource Management Plan.

### **III. PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed action is construction and operation of a public safety radio communications facility on the northern ridge of Buster Mountain west of Ely, Nevada, near Little Antelope Summit. The facility will support the 800 MHz Statewide EDACS radio system used by the Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP); the Nevada Department of Transportation; other federal, state and county public safety personnel. The site will be part of a statewide interoperability network where other users not operating on the 800 MHz radio system can be tied into the 800 MHz network through a common conventional channel interface allowing all users of any public safety and federal government communication platform to work together on one system.

The system goal is to provide complete radio communication coverage for the NHP along critical highway corridors. The Little Antelope Summit area has no radio or cellular communication facilities, leaving gaps in communication coverage. The proposed site location would fill in the gap between existing facilities to the east (Kimberly) and west (Prospect), providing radio communications coverage for public safety agencies along the US 50 corridor in White Pine and Eureka Counties. Signal distance is 50 miles from the facility.

This area has no radio communications or cellular telephone coverage. Consequently, law enforcement and emergency personnel needing radio communications must leave the area, travelling east or west over ten miles to get a radio signal. This adversely affects their ability to do their job and creates a potential for delayed responses to emergency and life-threatening incidents.

NDOT proposes to construct, operate, and maintain one new radio tower communication facility at the top northern end of a ridge on Buster Mountain in the White Pine Range of western White Pine County, Nevada. The site is 2 miles south of US 50 at Little Antelope Summit, overlooking Jakes Valley to the East. Appendix A contains maps and photographs of the project site.

<u>Project Description</u>. The site footprint will be 100 ft. by 100 ft. A 10 ft. by 12 ft. pre-constructed building will be moved intact onto the site and placed on a concrete foundation. The pre-cast, earth-tone building will house the radio equipment, sealed power batteries, and ancillary support equipment. A 40 ft. monopole steel tower will be placed on a 3 ft. by 3 ft. concrete foundation. Solar panels will provide the main power. The panels will be mounted on 7 ft. by 20 ft. footings. A standby generator will be installed on a 4 ft. by 5 ft. concrete footing with generator fuel supplied in two 500 gallon propane tanks on block foundations.

Site access is via a two-track dirt road heading south from U.S. 50 at Little Antelope Summit. The road climbs gradually up a north trending drainage for two miles. A new road will need to be created up the hillside for the last .26 miles to the project site location. The existing dirt road will be minimally improved to allow passage of a truck and trailer. To minimize the potential for causing increased public access and disturbance to the area, no road improvements will occur within the first 1000 feet of the dirt road from the U.S. 50 right-of-way fence. Improvements will consist of grading to smooth out ruts and removal of tree limbs extending into the road. The new access road will be graded to minimize disturbance and avoid erosion.

All state and federal safety standards will be followed. All appropriate County, State, and Federal permits will be obtained prior to land disturbance and facility construction. The facility and road locations will be surveyed in the Spring of 2008. A detailed location map will be submitted with the right-of-way application. A map showing the proposed facility location and the approximate location of the access road is included in Appendix A.

### **ALTERNATIVES**

### **No Action Alternative**

The no action alternative is to not build the communication facility. This alternative would leave law enforcement and other public safety personnel with no radio coverage in this area. The purpose of this site is to address the public safety communications needs of the Nevada Highway Patrol and the Nevada Department of Transportation. Other local law enforcement and public safety entities that use the 800 MHz Statewide EDACS radio system would also benefit from the additional coverage. Without the facility, life-threatening accidents and other emergencies in this area have delayed response time because public safety personnel must drive up to 10 miles in either direction to get signal reception for radio contact with the dispatch center. Conversely, the dispatch center cannot contact public safety personnel traveling in this area.

### **Other Alternatives**

NDOT communications experts have evaluated other possible locations in the area to determine the site which will provide the most effective coverage with the least amount of disturbance. Other alternatives provide less coverage, leaving gaps in signal reception; require more land disturbance to create access roads; and/or are not appropriate for facility construction and maintenance.

### IV. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The proposed site is in the Carbonate Woodland Zone of the Central Basin and Range eco-region, and is dominated by pinyon-juniper woodland and sagebrush slopes. No surface water, riparian or wetland vegetation occur on or near the site. The site is not part of, or adjacent to, any areas of critical environmental concern, wilderness, or wilderness study areas.

<u>Air Quality:</u> The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Air Pollution Control (NDEP/BAPC) has authority to regulate air pollutant emission sources and to enforce air quality regulations for activities associated with constructing this proposed communications tower. The area is unclassified/attainment for all criteria pollutants.

<u>Vegetation:</u> Buster Mountain lies within the Central Basin and Range region of the Great Basin within the Carbonate Woodland Zone. The project site is in Pinyon-Juniper Woodland (*Pinus monophylla & Juniperus utahensis*) with low sagebrush understory (*Artemisia arbuscula*). Associate vegetation includes:

**Shrubs:** big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), curlleaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), Utah serviceberry (*Amelanchier utahensis*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos longiflorus*), wax current (*Ribes cereum*), and broom-snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*).

**Herbaceous:** lupine (*Lupinus* spp.), violets (*viola purpurea & v. beckwithii*), goldenweed (*Stenotus acaulis*), indian paintbrush (*Castilleja* spp.), rock cress (*Arabis* spp.), wild onion (*Allium* spp.), *Lomatium* spp., phlox (*Pholx longifolia*), locoweed (*Astragalas* spp.), sticky geranium ((*Geranium viscosissimum*), desert peony (*Paeonia brownii*), mat buckwheat (*Eriogonum caespitosum*), common butterweed (*Senecio vulgaris*).

**Grasses:** a variety of native bunch grasses including squirrel tail (*Elymus elymoides*), bluegrass (*Poa* spp.), and great basin wild rye (*Elymus cinereus*). Invasive cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) is also present.

Nevada Natural Heritage Program (NNHP) listed starveling milkvetch (*Astragalus jejunus* var. *jejunus*) and rayless tansy aster (*Machaeranthera gridelioidoes* var. *depressa*) as occurring within a five mile radius of the site. Both are State ranked as vulnerable to decline because of their restricted range. An NDOT biologist surveyed the site in May 2007. No sensitive species were found. The NNHP report is in Appendix B.

<u>Noxious Weeds:</u> The site was surveyed for noxious weeds in May 2007. No noxious weeds occur on or near the site.

**Wildlife:** The following species, tracks and/or scat were encountered during the field survey:

Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), elk (*Cervus canadensis*), coyote (*Canis latrans*) black-tailed jackrabbits (*Lepus californicus*). Small rodent and reptile burrows occur sporatically on the hillside below the project site. Bird species present included song sparrows, Clark's nutcrackers, and mountain chickadees. No raptor nests were found on or near the site. The general area is probably used by sage grouse for forage and cover.

Migratory bird protection responsibilities are defined in the Executive Order issued January 11, 2001 under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and subsequent amendments (16 U.S.C. 703-711). Breeding season is generally March 15<sup>th</sup> - July 30<sup>th</sup> for most species in the BLM management area. The Nevada Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan identifies the following migratory bird species associated with pinyon-juniper woodland: Pinyon jay, Gray vireo, Ferruginous hawk, Western bluebird, Gray flycatcher, Virginia's warbler, Juniper titmouse, Black-throated gray warbler, Mountain bluebird, and Scott's oriole.

<u>Threatened and Endangered Species:</u> The NNHP did not list any threatened or endangered species in this area. The vegetation, soils, topography, and habitat are homogeneous with the surrounding landscape with no unusual micro-sites indicative of endemic or rare species.

<u>Wild horse and Burro:</u> The site is along the eastern edge of the Monte Cristo Wild Horse Management Area, which comprises 369,800 acres. Wild hose management would not be affected by the proposed action.

Grazing and Range: The site is on the ridgeline between two grazing allotments. The Moorman ranch allotment to the east covers 123,491 acres of public land and is permitted for 841 cattle from March 1 to February 28 for 10,092 AUMs. Grazing use on Buster Mountain is on a year-round rotational grazing schedule. Cattle use on the ridge top is minimal from mid-June to mid-October. The Newark grazing allotment to the west covers 218,105 acres and includes the South Newark use area, which is permitted for 85 cattle from November 1 to April 2 for 428 AUMs. Little to no use occurs on the ridge top on the Newark side. Cattle grazing would not be affected by the proposed action.

<u>Water:</u> No live surface water bodies, springs, or wells exist within or near the site. The land disturbance to create a road to the site and excavate a pad for the facility will not impact surface or ground water quality. Use of this site does not require a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Permit since no Waters of the U.S. are affected by this action.

<u>Visual Resources:</u> A clear line of site from the antennae at the top of the building to US 50 is necessary for radio signal coverage. Consequently, the site may be visible from U.S. 50. Every effort will be made to reduce the visual impact of the site by making the tower only as tall as is necessary for signal transmission (40 feet) and painting the building an earth-tone color to blend in with the surroundings. This area has no BLM visual resource classification.

**Social and Economic:** The site is in a rural area, surrounded by public land.

<u>Cultural Resources:</u> The site was inventoried through a formal cultural resource site survey and the ground reconnaissance work completed in May 2007 and submitted to BLM. The report is being completed under Nevada BLM Class III survey guidelines and will be submitted to the BLM for review and acceptance. The site does not contain cultural resources and will have no effect to historic properties. Due to a large scatter of trash with the majority less than 50 years of age along the dirt access road near its origin off U.S. 50, vehicle traffic associated with this project will not deviate from the existing access road for the first 1000 feet south of the right-of-way fence.

**Recreation:** Although the communications facility site is not within a recreation management area, the road improvements are within the U.S. Highway 50 Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Illipah Reservoir is within five miles of the proposed project area and is one of the most popular recreation sites within the District, receiving an average of 2,000 visitors a month. The majority of the recreation occurring in the vicinity of the project area is dispersed off-highway vehicle use, camping, fishing, and hunting.

Table I, Affected Critical Elements, lists the areas of potential impact identified during a joint field review conducted May 2, 2007 and subsequent information gathering.

### Table I AFFECTED CRITICAL ELEMENTS

Critical Element	Affected	Additional Considerations	Affected
	Yes No		Yes No
Air Quality	_X	Forestry & Vegetation	_ <u>X</u>
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)	<u>X</u> _	Grazing/Range	X_
Cultural Resources	X_	Noise	X_
Environmental Justice	X_	Recreation	X_
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	X_	Social & Economic	X_
Floodplains	X_	Visual	X_
Noxious Weeds	<u>X</u>	Wild Horse & Burro	X_
Native American Religious Concerns	X_	Wildlife & Fisheries Including Migratory Birds	_X
Threatened or Endangered Species	X_	Other land uses	X_
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	X_		
Water Quality	X_		
Wetlands/Riparian Zones	X_		
Wild and Scenic Rivers	X_		
Wilderness	X_		

### V. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

<u>Air Quality</u>: Excavation, clearing, and grading activities associated with constructing the access road and facility could impact the local air quality over the short-term, because those activities have the potential to generate fugitive dust. Exhaust from mobile equipment can also impact the local air quality when construction is going on. However, these construction-related impacts would be relatively short-lived, and would not significantly impact local air quality over the long-term. No adverse air quality impacts are anticipated during operation and maintenance of the proposed radio tower.

<u>Noxious Weeds:</u> Disturbance of native soils and vegetation allows opportunistic noxious weed species to invade. If these species are not controlled, they may spread into undisturbed areas and compete with the native species. The likelihood of a noxious weed invasion increases if noxious weeds are present on adjacent sites or if seeds are transported from an invaded area to a disturbed area by equipment or soil movement.

<u>Forestry and Vegetation:</u> The site pad will disturb a 100 ft. by 100 ft. area at the top of the ridge. The access road will create a disturbance 15 ft. wide by .26 miles long at an acceptable grade to minimize disturbance and potential for erosion. Some pinyon pine and juniper trees will need to be removed.

<u>Migratory Birds:</u> Loss of potential nesting and roosting areas may impact resident bird species as well as migratory birds. Ground clearing activities during avian breeding season (March 15 through July 30) would have the highest potential impact to nesting birds.

Dust, noise and vibration caused by construction activities may cause terrestrial and avian species to abandon habitat they currently use for forage, cover, or nesting. Additionally, construction activity may affect the movement of individuals near the site.

### **VI. MITIGATION MEASURES**

<u>Air Quality:</u> Emissions of criteria pollutants are regulated by the NDEP/BAPC through the issuance of air quality permits. Contractors who perform construction activities at the site will be required to obtain and pay for a surface disturbance permit from the NDEP/BAPC. Even if a surface disturbance permit is not required, contractors have the general duty under the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC 445B.22037) to prevent the generation of fugitive dust at all times. Contractors are also required to limit idling of diesel-powered vehicles, as per NAC 445B.576.4.

Noxious Weeds: Noxious weed surveys will be conducted by an NDOT biologist for three years following facility construction to assure disturbances did not introduce noxious weed species to the site. If noxious weeds or other invasives deemed detrimental by BLM are found, a BLM weeds specialist will be consulted and an appropriate treatment plan developed and implemented. Control standards and measures will comply with applicable state and federal regulations. Weed treatments may include the use of herbicides, and only those herbicides approved for use on public lands by the BLM will be evaluated for use.

Road and site construction activities must follow NDOT weed prevention best management practices (BMP) guidelines to prevent noxious weed introductions. BMPs include washing equipment brought onsite, avoiding weed infested areas on and off site, and using certified weed-free materials for erosion control when necessary.

<u>Forestry and Vegetation</u>: Ground disturbance will be minimized and tree removal avoided as much as possible. The right-of-way fence along US 50 has a non-descript pole gate for access to the dirt road leading to the site. Although access is available to the public, the road is a dead end and will not be improved for the first 1,000 ft. to discourage off-road vehicle traffic. If it appears access to the area is increasing due to the construction of this facility, BLM will be contacted to determine if restricting vehicle access to the area is warranted. If it is, the gate at the U.S. 50 access point can be locked.

Migratory Birds: Vegetation removal will be conducted to conform with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to avoid impacts to listed migratory birds (50 CFR 10.13) that may be actively utilizing vegetation for nesting. If land clearing occurs during avian breeding season (March 15 through July 30), NDOT biologists will survey the site for nesting birds prior to vegetation removal. If active nests are located, the area surrounding the nest, including a buffer zone, will be flagged and avoided until the birds fledge.

### VII. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are those effects on resources of an area or region caused by a combination of existing and reasonably foreseeable future projects that may individually be minor but combined together may be enhanced. Statewide, road construction and other ground disturbing activities fragment wildlife habitat and contribute to the cumulative degradation of Nevada ecosystems.

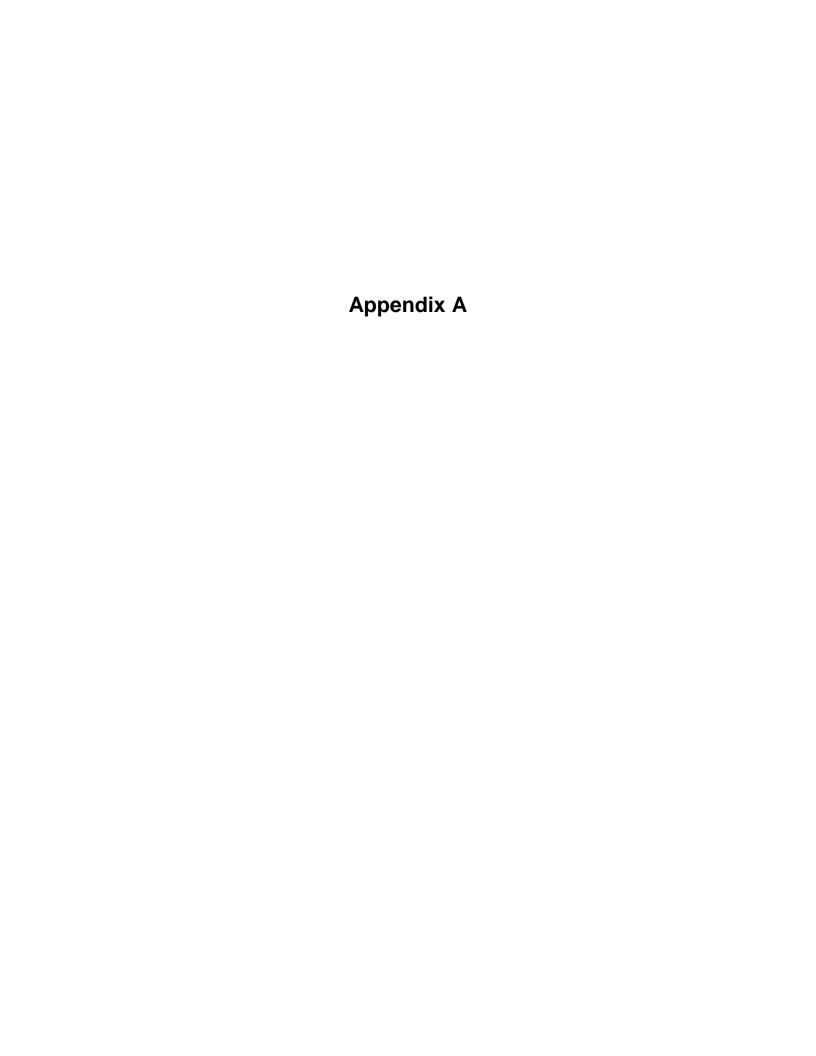
The use of this site will contribute to the removal of native habitat and the potential to temporarily harass resident wildlife. Road improvements may encourage increased off-road vehicle use in the area, which, in turn, may adversely affect wildlife and vegetation. Restricted access may be necessary if off-road vehicles damage to vegetation occurs.

Overall, the proposed project will contribute less than one acre of additional disturbance to the area. The communication facility is visited periodically, and not continually manned, so resident and migratory wildlife can continue to use the site for forage, nesting, and cover. Consequently, the negative cumulative long-term impacts are minimal. The benefit to the public is through enhanced communication facilities for public safety personnel, which improves public safety and emergency vehicle response time along the US 50 corridor between Ely and Eureka.

### VIII CONTACT LIST

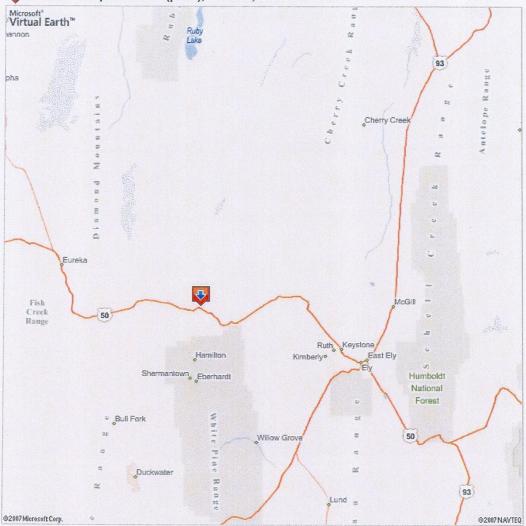
- 1. Doris Metcalf, Realty Specialist, Ely BLM
- 2. Marian Lichtler, Wildlife Biologist, BLM
- 3. Ben Noyes, Wild Horse Specialist, BLM
- 4. Lisa Gilbert, Archaeologist Technician, BLM
- 5. Mark Lowrie, Range Specialist, BLM
- 6. Gary Medlin, Soil Scientist, BLM
- 7. Bonnie Million, Weed Coordinator
- 8. Kalem Lenard, Recreation Specialist
- 9. Dave Jacobson, Wilderness Coordinator
- 10. Melanie Peterson, Environmental Protection Specialist
- 11. Elvis Wall, Native American Coordinator
- 12. Sheri Wysong, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
- 13. Jon Bunch, Manager, R/W Engineering, NDOT
- 14. Richard Brooks, Communications Division, NDOT
- 15. Joe Christensen, Radio Technician, NDOT
- 16. John MacDonald, Communications, NDOT
- 17. Chris Young, Cultural Resources, NDOT
- 18. Chris Ennes, Water Quality Engineer, NDOT
- 19. Pat Mohn, Air Quality Engineer, NDOT
- 20. Robert Piekarz, Hazardous Waste Engineer, NDOT
- 21. Patricia Brisbin, Social-Economic Analyst, NDOT

### Site maps and photographs follow

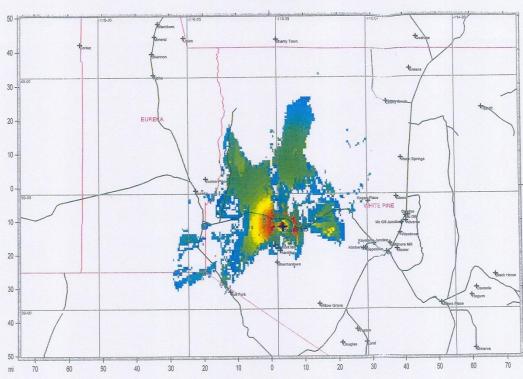


### Maps Live Search Maps

### Little Antelope Summit (pass), Nevada, United States





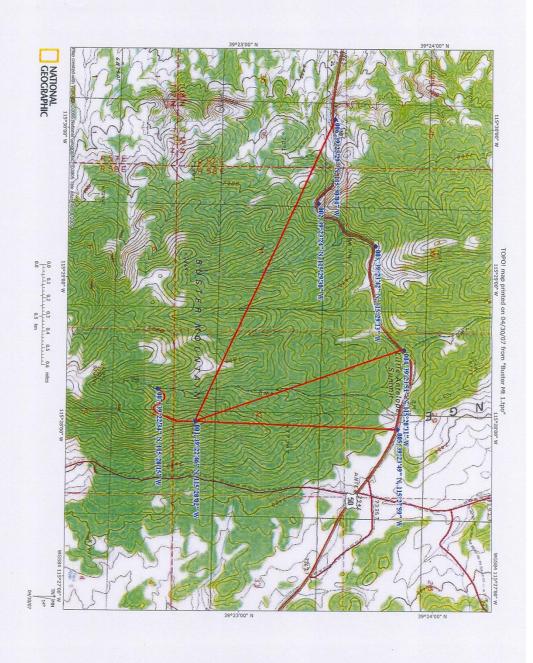


Signal Profile: -97 dBm



County Borders State Borders Highways

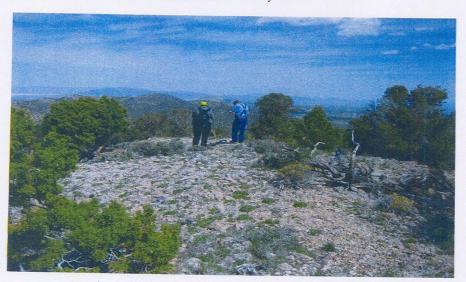
Map Scale: 1:1000000 1" = 15.78 mi V|H Size: 100.43 x 148.25 mi Lat/Lon Grid

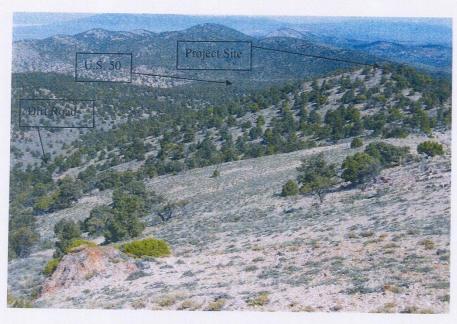


Dirt road from U.S. 50 heading south toward the site.



Buster Mountain Proposed Communications Facility Site





From the dirt road looking upslope toward the southeast



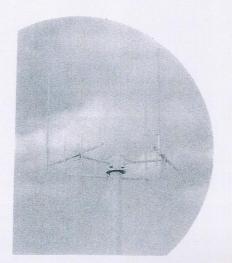


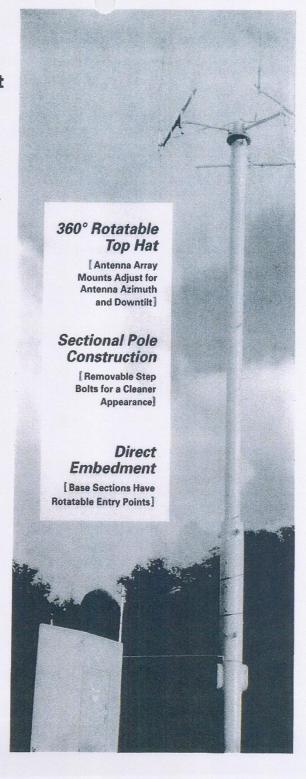
### Fast Installation Low Installed Cost

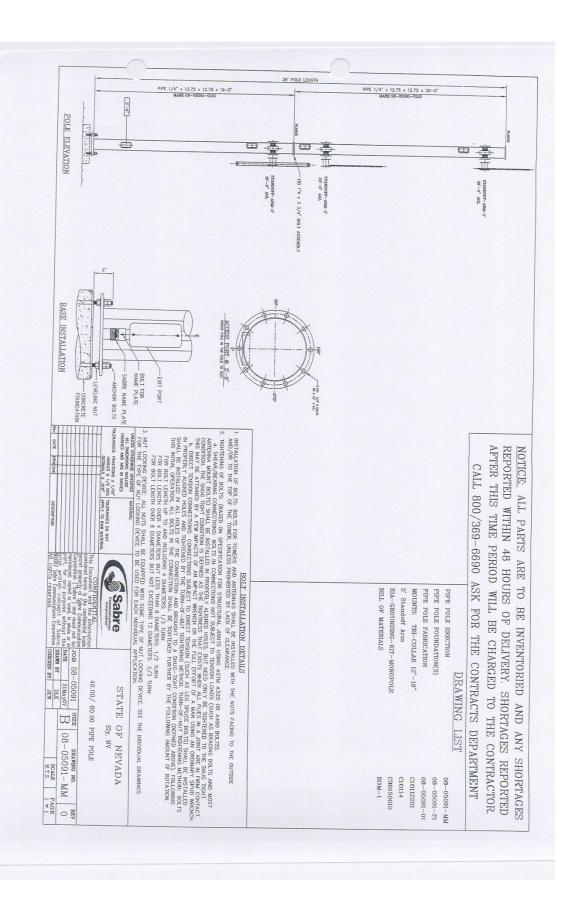
- Lower freight costs than onepiece wood or concrete poles
- Lower crane costs than heavier wood or concrete poles
- Route lines inside pole for concealment & protection
- Install in as little as one day
- 360° versatility

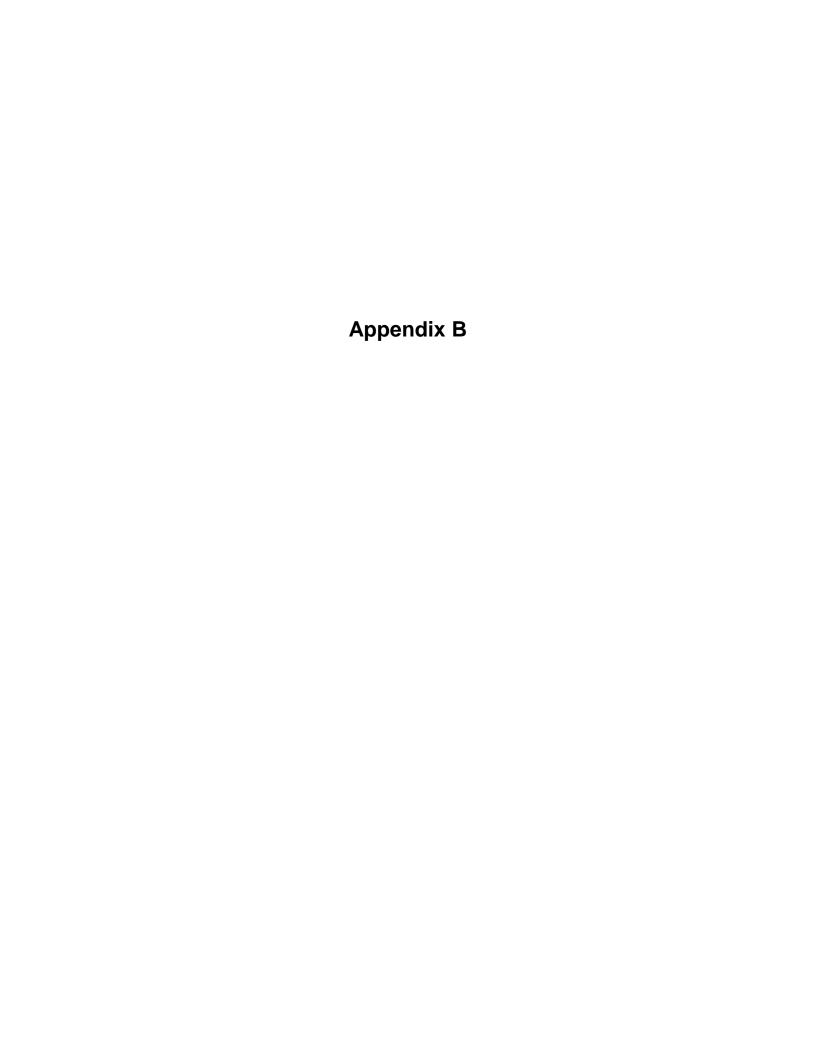


**Tower Structures** 









### **Biological Survey**

Date:

1 4 2 4

May 5, 2007

Site:

Buster Mountain radio tower site

Location:

West of Ely, U.S. 50 WP 25.5, Little Antelope Summit

T17N R58E Sec 32 NAD 1983 UTM 11 0632001E 4360020N

Description: The proposed radio town is at the top of a peak on the northern end of Buster Mountain in the White Pine Range of western White Pine County, directly south of Little Antelope Summit. The site overlooks Jakes Valley to the East. A two-track dirt road climbs gradually up north-south trending drainage for 2 miles. An access road will need to be created up the east-facing slope to the top of the peak. The vegetation is homogenous Pinyon-Juniper up the drainage, across the slope, and on the peak, with some variation of larger, more mesic species along the drainage bottom and smaller, more xeric vegetation at the ridge top. Rock outcrops occur to the south and east of the project site and will not be affected by the road or tower site.

Dominant Vegetation: Pinyon-Juniper Woodland (Pinus monophylla & Juniperus utahensis) with low sagebrush understory (Artemisia arbuscula).

### Associate Vegetation:

Shrubs: big sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata), curlleaf mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus ledifolius), bitterbrush (Purshia tridentata), Utah serviceberry (Amelanchier utahensis), Snowberry (Symphoricarpos longiflorus), Wax current (Ribes cereum) Broomsnakeweed (Gutierrezia sarothrae)

Herbaceous: Lupine (Lupinus spp.), violets (viola purpurea & v. beckwithii), goldenweed (Stenotus acaulis), Indian paintbrush (Castilleja spp.), Rock cress (Arabis spp.), wild onion (Allium spp.), Lomatium spp., phlox (Pholx longifolia), locoweed (Astragalas spp.), sticky geranium ((Geranium viscosissimum), Desert peony (Paeonia brownii), mat buckwheat (Eriogonum caespitosum), common butterweed (Senecio vulgaris)

Grasses: a variety of native bunch grasses including squirrel tail (*Elymus elymoides*), bluegrass (*Poa* spp.), and great basin wild rye (*Elymus cinereus*). Invasive cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) is also present.

**Noxious Weeds:** 

None present.

Wildlife: small rodent and reptile burrows, blacktailed jackrabbits, deer, elk, song sparrow, Clark's nutcracker, mountain chickadee

Water/Drainage:

None

Developed areas:

None.

**General Notes:** 

This site has no biological concerns.

Conducted by:

Lori Bellis, NDOT biologist



### Nevada Natural Heritage Program



Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Richard H. Bryan Building

901 South Stewart Street, suite 5002 • Carson City, Nevada 89701-5245, U.S.A. tel: (775) 684-2900 • internet: http://heritage.nv.gov

19 April 2007

James D. Murphy Environmental Services Division Nevada Department of Transportation 1263 South Stewart Street Carson City, NV 89712

RE: Data request received 19 April 2007

Dear Mr. Murphy:

We are pleased to provide the information you requested on endangered, threatened, candidate, and/or at risk plant and animal taxa recorded on or near the Proposed Radio Tower Site near Hamilton, in White Pine County. We searched our database and maps for the following, a five kilometer radius around:

Township 17N Range 58E Section 08

The enclosed printout lists the taxa recorded within the given area. Please be aware that habitat may also be available for, the pygmy rabbit, *Brachylagus idahoensis*, a Nevada Bureau of Land Management Sensitive Species. We do not have complete data on various raptors that may also occur in the area; for more information contact Ralph Phenix, Nevada Division of Wildlife at (775) 688-1565. Note that all cacti, yuccas, and Christmas trees are protected by Nevada state law (NRS 527.060-.120), including taxa not tracked by this office.

Please note that our data are dependent on the research and observations of many individuals and organizations, and in most cases are not the result of comprehensive or site-specific field surveys. Natural Heritage reports should never be regarded as final statements on the taxa or areas being considered, nor should they be substituted for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments.

Thank you for checking with our program. Please contact us for additional information or further assistance.

Sincerely.

Eric S. Miskow Biologist/Data Manager

# At Risk Taxa Recorded Near the Hamilton Radio Tower Project Area Compiled by the Nevada Natural Heritage Program for the Nevada Department of Transport

	Last	1987-PRE 1898-10 1979-06-03
19 April 2007	Prec	999
	UTMN	4356844.37 4343490.81 4358962.07
	UTME	626923.22 632416.96 644051.23
	Grank	G3T3 G5T3T4 G5T3T4
	Srank	S27 S3
	State	
	Blm Usfs	
	Blu	
	Usfws	
	Соттоп пате	starveling milkvetch rayless tansy aster rayless tansy aster
•	Scientific name	Plants Astragalus jejunus var. jejunus Machaeranthera grindelioides var. depressa Machaeranthera grindelioides var. depressa

### Precision (Prec) of Mapped Occurrence:

Precision, or radius of uncertainty around latitude/longitude coordinates:

- OZO
- Seconds: within a three-second radius Minutes: within a one-minute radius, approximately 2 km or 1.5 miles General: within about 8 km or 5 miles, or to map quadrangle or place name

## Nevada Natural Heritage Program Global (Grank) and State (Srank) Ranks for Threats and/or Vulnerability:

- Global rank indicator, based on worldwide distribution at the species level Global trinomial rank indicator, based on worldwide distribution at the infraspecific OH
- level State rank indicator, based on distribution within Nevada at the lowest taxonomic evel

S

- Critically imperiled and especially vulnerable to extinction or extirpation due to

  - extreme rarity, imminent threats, or other factors
    Imperiled due to rarity or other demonstrable factors
    Vulnerable to decline because rare and local throughout its range, or with very restricted range
- Long-term concern, though now apparently secure; usually rare in parts of its
  - range, especially at its periphery Demonstrably secure, widespread, and abundant
    - Accidental within Nevada
- Breeding status within Nevada (excludes resident taxa)
  - Historical; could be rediscovered
- Non-breeding status within Nevada (excludes resident taxa)
  - Faxonomic status uncertain VERNOUS
- Enduring occurrences cannot be defined (usually given to migrant or accidental birds) Unrankable
  - Assigned rank uncertain